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Message Text

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ACTION SNM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CTME-00 AID-05 HEW-04 ICAE-00
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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SNAR, TU
SUBJ: CUSTOMS PROPOSAL TO ASSIGN TEAM TO TURKEY

REF: STATE 92068

1. CURRENT VISIT TO TURKEY BY US CUSTOMS' OFFICIALS BARBAGELATA AND HENRY TO PROPOSE INSTRUCTION TRAINING PROGRAM HAS PROVIDED USEFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR TURKISH CUSTOMS' OFFICERS TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR PREVIOUS COOPERATION AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP. IN THE BARBAGELATA AND HENRY MEETINGS WITH DIRGEN FOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS DOGAN AKIN, ATTENDED ALSO BY EMBOFF, DIRGEN AKIN STRESSED THE VALUE OF TRAINING PROVIDED EARLIER AND THE DESIRE OF TURKISH CUSTOMS TO DEVELOP ITS OWN TRAINING PROGRAM, BUILDING ON THE INSTRUCTION PROVIDED BY US CUSTOMS. WE FEEL CERTAIN THAT TURKISH CUSTOMS WILL BE RECEPTIVE TO INCREASED CONTACTS WITH US CUSTOMS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ASSITANCE IN ACQUIRING NEW EQUIPMENT, AS WELL AS TRAINING.

2. THE TEMPO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INCREASED CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO CUSTOMS AGENCIES WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. A MAJOR ATTACTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAS BEEN ITS GRADUAL
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PACE AND THE WILLINGNESS OF US CUSTOMS TO BE FLEXIBLE AND MODIFY ITS PROGRAMS WHEN NECESSARY TO FIT TURKISH NEEDS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS IS LIKELY TO VIEW THE PROPOSAL FOR ASSIGNMENT OF A FULL-TIME TEAM TO ANKARA AS AN UNNECESSARILY SPEEDY ESCALATION. WHILE TURKISH CUSTOMS IS PROBABLY WILLING TO EXPAND RELATIONS, THEY WILL AT THE SAME TIME WANT TO PRESERVE THE IMAGE THAT THEY ARE IN CONTROL AND

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RELYING ON THE US ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AS NECESSARY.

3. TURKISH CUSTOMS' ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL TO STATION A TEAM IN ANKARA MAY ALSO BE AFFECTED BY A STRONG, TRADITIONAL FEAR OF FOREIGN DOMINANCE. THE TURKS REMEMBER VIVIDLY THE HISTORY OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN THEIR CUSTOMS AFFAIRS DURING THE LAST DAYS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE WHEN FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS SEIZED TURKISH CUSTOMS HOUSES AND COLLECTED CUSTOMS DUTIES TO REPAY DEBTS OWED BY THE OTTOMAN SULTANS. WHILE NO ONE IS SUGGESTING THAT THESE KINDS OF MOTIVES MAY BE INVOLVED TODAY, THE POTENTIAL FOR IRRESPONSIBLE PRESS EXPLOITATION AND EMBARRASSMENT TO TURKISH OFFICIALS WHO HAVE OEPNLY COOPERATED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED.

4. ADDRESSING SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSALS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE TWO OPERATIONS ADVISORS WHO WOULD BE ACTIVE IN THE ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AREAS MIGHT DUPLICATE FUNCTIONS ALREADY BEING PERFORMED. AT PRESENT, DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (DEA) OFFICERS IN ANKARA, IZMIR, AND ISTANBUL MAINTAIN COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH THE TURKISH CUSTOMS POLICE WHO ARE THE INSPECTION ARM OF THE MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS. THE CUSTOMS POLICE HAVE LIMITED AUTHORITY. THEIR POLICE FUNCTIONS STOP UPON THE DISCOVERY OF CONTRABAND; THE TURKISH NATIONAL POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING CUSTODY OF CONTRABAND GOODS, MAKING ARRESTS, AND INVESTIGATION. AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR COMMUNICATIONS, THE UN FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNFDAC) IS PROVIDING TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT TO THE MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS OUT OF ITS 1977 PROGRAM BUDGET. WHILE THIS EQUIPMENT IS NOT EXPECTED TO SOLVE ALL OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS OF THE MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS FOR THE PRESENT OR FUTURE, UNFDAC (WHICH RECEIVES A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF ITS BUDGET FROM THE USG) COULD RESENT WHAT MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS INTERFERENCE IN AN AREA WHERE IT HAS BEGUN TO ASSIST THE GOT.

5. THE ONLY TEAM MEMBER WHICH SEEMS TO BE JUSTIFIED IS THE TRAINING ADVISOR. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS FUNCTION CAN BE HANDLED ADEQUATELY AND MORE COST EFFECTIVELY ON AN AD HOC BASIS BY TDY TRAINING PERSONNEL AND REPRESENTATIVES OF CUSTOMS' INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS DIVISION WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EMBASSY NARCOTICS COORDINATOR.

6. CONCERNING THE PROPOSAL TO STATION A REGIONAL CUSTOMS ADVISOR IN ANKARA, WE WOULD LIKE TO BE CERTAIN THAT HIS FUNCTIONS WOULD NOT OVERLAP WITH CAPABILITIES ALREADY AVAILABLE IN THIS REGION. AS IS KNOWN, THERE IS A DISTRICT

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OFFICE OF DEA IN ANKARA WHICH HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA. DEA MAINTAINS RELATIONS WITH POLICE OFFICIALS AND WITH CUSTOMS OFFICIALS IN THE REGION FOR INVESTIGATORY MATTERS. IN THIS RESPECT, IT SEEMS THAT THE REGIONAL CUSTOMS ADVISOR'S DUTIES WOULD BE REDUNDANT AND COULD FRAGMENT US ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION EFFORTS. AS FOR TRAINING, WE WONDER IF REGIONAL EMBASSY NARCOTICS COORDINATORS ARE NOT CAPABLE OF CONTINUING TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LIAISON FUNCTIONS WITH REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS.

7. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ASSIGNMENT OF A TEAM IS UNNECESSARY AT THIS TIME. THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY IS LIKELY TO PREFER A CONTINUOUS, MODERATE ESCALATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO CUSTOMS SERVICES RATHER THAN THE KIND OF JUMP IMPLIED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SENDING OF A FULL-TIME TEAM TO TURKEY.

8. WE BELIEVE THAT IT MAY BE USEFUL TO DISCUSS THE CUSTOMS PROPOSAL FURTHER IN EARLY MAY WHEN MS FALCO IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT ANKARA. AT THAT TIME, IF APPROPRIATE, WE MIGHT ALSO WISH TO RAISE THE MATTER INFORMALLY WITH TURKISH OFFICIALS.
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